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How
Rumania: The ~~NAME~~ of Enslavement

The Soviet Union has used the second World War to consolidate a vast Communist colonial empire in Europe and Asia. It accomplished this task while repairing its own war devastation, with only one or two embarrassing outbreaks of opposition, and at minor cost in men and money. On occasion it was able to enlist the unwilling aid of its recent allies who so bitterly oppose both Soviet philosophy and intentions. In half a generation, then, the USSR has established an empire that includes virtually all territories ever held by the tsars and some lands never controlled by the imperial regime. By virtue of its imperialist base, the USSR plays a role in world affairs that only once - in 1815 - was even approached by its imperial forebears. A veritable Communist heartland, its surrounding empire sits astride two continents, impinges on three oceans, and weighs on the hearts of all free men.

How could a single nation alter the world balance in so short a time without provoking a major conflict with other Great Powers?

It will help if we examine in detail the Soviet technique of domination as applied to a single country. Perhaps the best one to study is Rumania, a non-Slavic neighbor of the Soviet Union, bitterly anti-Communist in sentiment, strongly nationalist in feeling. In August 1944, Rumania was at war

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with the Soviet Union. By New Years Day of 1948, her king, loved by all his people, had abdicated, her revered political leaders were imprisoned, her government was controlled by native Communists. This result, so desirable from the Soviet point of view, was accomplished with a minimum of internal disturbance and international tension.

How was it managed?

In foreign policy, as perhaps in no other human activity, it is important to know what you want. The Soviets in mid-1944 knew precisely what they wanted: first, the utter defeat of Germany; second, the advancement of Communism. If the two goals could be reached together, so much the better. During early 1944, it became clear that capitalist Rumania, anti-Soviet ally of Hitler, would be the first nation to be invaded by the Red Army in its advance westward. In order to allay western fears, Foreign Minister Molotov was hurried forward with a formal statement that the USSR would not interfere with the social structure or internal affairs of Rumania. (Nowadays such a policy would be called "Coexistence"). Molotov's statement gave encouragement to those Rumanians who had opposed entering the war as an ally of Germany or who were having their opinions changed by the pressure of events and the Red Army. Unofficial Rumanian emissaries, headed by old Prince Barbu Stirbey, made their way abroad in the spring of the year, to negotiate with the British, Americans, and Russians for Rumania's withdrawal from the war.

These Rumanian diplomats soon discovered, however, that an arrangement for a straightforward betrayal of their German ally could not be made quickly with the Russians, who had demanded that they play the major role in negotiations with this neighboring state. By mid-August 1944, agreement for an armistice had not been reached in Cairo, yet the Red Army had entered Rumanian territory. Rumanian leaders at home now took charge. With the approval of Iuliu Maniu and Dinu Bratianu, leaders of the National Peasant and Liberal Parties and vigorous opponents of the pro-German policy, the arrest of Marshal Ion Antonescu, the Rumanian dictator, and his foreign minister, Mihai Antonescu (no relation), by the King at the palace in Bucharest was planned. On 23 August, the Antonescus were summoned to the palace and arrested at the order of King Michael. General Constantine Sanatescu, aide to the King and a career army officer, was asked to form an all-Party cabinet.

The destruction of the Antonescu dictatorship permitted long-suppressed political forces to boil to the surface. Maniu and Bratianu, the nation's foremost political leaders, would be assured positions of responsibility in a rationally-run state. The Social-Democratic Party, led by Constantin Titel-Petrescu, a Bucharest lawyer well known in theatrical circles, was not strong but it did provide a haven for left-wingers who could not stomach the Communists.

Rumanian Communism, however, was a curious phenomenon. A weakly offspring of socialism, the Rumanian Communist Party had been proscribed virtually since its creation. Whatever leadership it had been able to develop -- the leaders of the Rumanian party had never been better than third-rate -- was in the Soviet Union or in hiding. Its total membership on 23 August 1944 was not more than one thousand, and was probably much less.

The hard facts of geography, nevertheless, gave Rumanian Communists their chance. Maniu and Bratianu knew that no regime could now exist in Rumanian without the tacit approval of the USSR. How better could Soviet approval be assured than to accept Communist assistance for the proposed coup d'etat and agree to Communist ministers entering the new government? Conservative Rumanian hopes of a rational working relationship with the Communists were favorably influenced by the nature of the Communist leadership on the spot.

Lucretziu Patrascanu, a lawyer and member of a well-known intellectual family, was the leader of the Communist Party. Patrascanu was a home-trained Communist product who had never visited the USSR. Party leadership had fallen to him when such leaders as Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had been imprisoned and Ana Pauker exiled to the Soviet Union. The middle class leaders, many of whom had known him and his family, believed they could work with him.

Any illusions King Michael and his advisors may have had regarding the roles of the USSR and the Western Powers in the Balkans should have been dissipated by events following close on the heels of the coup d'etat. The reversal of Rumania's role in the war and the passage of 15 divisions to the side of the United Nations in no wise influenced the Soviets. On Soviet demand, negotiations for an armistice with Rumania were moved to Moscow and there permitted to drag on until terms were at last signed on 12 September. In the interim the Red Army had advanced beyond Bucharest without opposition and had taken ^{160,000} Rumanian prisoners. ^{a large} ~~Thus approximately~~ ^{all} ~~percent~~ ^{thus} of the Rumanian Army was captured without Red casualties, and huge quantities of stores and equipment seized.

The same result could have been achieved through signature of an armistice, but capture of a large portion of the Rumanian Army and seizure of its supplies as spoils of war ^{would} ~~could~~ not have been so easily accomplished. Whatever may have been Soviet intentions toward Rumania in early September, eventual Communist control of the country was aided by capture of much of its armed strength.

The Russians put to good use the lessons they had learned from the Italian armistice negotiations. As General Eisenhower had signed the Italian document for all the Allies, so Marshal Malinowski performed the same function with the Rumanians. In contrast to the Allied control commission for Italy, composed only of British and Americans, the three Allies were

represented on the Rumanian Commission but complete executive authority resided in the Soviet command. The British and Americans, it seemed, had acquiesced in Soviet domination of Rumanian affairs. Perhaps they took at face value Soviet denials of any intention to change the Rumanian social order. *The Armistice terms they permitted*

Whatever the Soviet intentions may have been in these early days of the Soviets to impose gave the latter a completely
September, the Armistice terms as finally drawn up allowed the Russians
free hand in the country.
a completely free hand in the country. The Soviet High Command was given the right to censor all media of public communication, reparations payable in commodities and the right to demand unlimited supplies and services for military purposes. Soviet domination of Rumania was complete.

Rumanians quickly learned that the active instrument of Soviet domination would be the Rumanian Communists. Positions of leadership in the Rumanian Communist Party were immediately taken by Communists returning from exile in the USSR. Two of the most prominent were Vasile Luca, a Hungarian, and Ana Pauker, a Jew. Emil Bodnaras, an Army officer who had deserted to the USSR in the early thirties, had returned clandestinely before the coup d'etat of 23 August, to organize a Communist guerilla force. Other Soviet-trained Communists given responsible positions of responsibility were Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, a railroad worker, and Teohari Georgescu, a printer, both of whom were released from Rumanian prisons by the coup d'etat. With the exception of Ana Pauker, widow of a member of a

well-known Rumanian Jewish family for whose death in the USSR as a Trotskyite she was allegedly responsible, these people were unknown in Rumanian public life. Indeed, the only Communist leaders who had not undergone Soviet indoctrination was the Minister of Justice, ~~Lucretia~~ Patrascanu. Effective subversion of the Rumanian state was entrusted to these Communists, acting under the immediate direction of the Soviet element of the Control Commission. The presence of the Red Army inhibited effective opposition from the majority of Rumanians.

While forming a Rumanian policy in the autumn of 1944, the Soviets had to consider the course of the war and the reactions of their Western Allies. ^{probable} Whatever ~~may have been ultimate Soviet intentions,~~ ^{their intentions may have been,} during this time a slow, steady drift toward the left was noticeable in governmental affairs. Successive reorganizations of the cabinet increased Communist strength while diminishing the influence of the traditional forces. The first victims were Iuliu ^{Maniu} and Diniu Bratianu, Ministers of State in the first cabinet of General Sanatescu. When the first Sanatescu government was reorganized these two men, the most influential in Rumania, lost their posts. Patrascanu, however, continued as Minister of Justice.

By the end of the year, unrelenting Communist pressure had forced the appointment of General Nicolae Radescu as prime minister. General Radescu, an elderly retired officer, who had won brief fame and a term in a concentration camp under Antonescu by a letter to the German Ambassador

attacking Germany's policy. His reputation as anti-German apparently won him Communist support. The Radescu Cabinet was notable for the number of Communists appointed to posts of sub-ministerial rank. Teohari Georgescu, for example, became Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior. Radescu put himself in charge of this Ministry.

By early 1945, however, the Russians believed that they could safely move against the Rumanian Government. ~~Ana Pauker~~, Gheorghiu-Dej ~~and~~ reunited visited Moscow, ostensibly to negotiate on the. While there, ~~they~~ were instructed to begin agitation against the Radescu Government and Rumanian conservative elements. Early in February, therefore, street demonstrations against Radescu and the "reactionaries" began, and grew in frequency and violence. General Radescu, as Minister of Interior, attempted to quell the disturbances. The Communists redoubled their violence, which they then blamed on Radescu. At the height of the trouble Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinskiy flew to Bucharest, and demanded that the King dismiss the "reactionary" Radescu. King Mihai, shocked at this crude interference in Rumanian internal affairs, at first unsuccessfully attempted to name Prince Barbu Stirbey. Vyshinsky in turn demanded the appointment of Petru Groza, a wealthy Transylvanian industrialist, the organizer of the Plowman's Front, a splinter peasant group, and Communist stooge. Vyshinsky's performance at the palace was typically Communist in its crudity. The King was given two hours to appoint Groza and a new cabinet. to take the responsibility On 6 March the new cabinet assumed office. General Radescu fled to the safety of the British Mission.

The makeup of the Groza cabinet clearly showed Soviet tactics in the early stages of the ⁱⁿRumanian takeover. Groza, the figurehead prime minister, was a vain man, shallow, ambitious and easily led. He was not, ^{however,} a member of the Rumanian Communist Party. Gheorghe Tatarescu, a legendary figure even among corrupt Rumanian politicians, a former member of Bratianu's Liberal Party, supporter of Rumanian fascism and hence subject to trial as a war criminal, became Foreign Minister. Other posts were filled by non-Communists representing splinter parties and non-Communist groups. The Ministry of Interior, controlling the police of the nation, was assumed by Teohari Georgescu. Gheorghiu-Dej became Minister of Communications. Perhaps because she was a Jew, Ana Pauker remained outside the government.

Reasons for Soviet imposition of the Groza Government regime at this time are even now not entirely clear. Whatever may have been Stalin's immediate intention, however, this action at once opened the road to the ultimate installation of a Communist regime in Rumania and sowed the seed of lasting dissention between the USSR and the West. The Soviet action, coming so soon after the Yalta agreement of ¹¹February 1945, seemed a callous repudiation of the pledge ^{the}three states had made to aid citizens of former German satellite nations in the formation of democratic governments through free elections. Whether motivated by Communist doctrinal considerations,

a desire to use Western preoccupation with the Pacific war or a belief that informal agreements with the British on spheres of influence in the Balkans gave them a special status in Rumania, the ^{frapne}~~violent~~ Soviet installation of the Groza Government started a conflict that has not yet ended.

As soon as they gained effective control of the Rumanian Government ^{an} the Russians began ~~their~~ assault on the Rumanian social system. The first important Soviet-sponsored move was the agrarian reform of 22 March 1945. Under the terms of this decree, issued without the King's signature, all arable land in excess of 50 hectares, including a proportionate amount of inventory and livestock, was to be expropriated without compensation and given to peasants owing less than 5 hectares. Certain well-organized estates, capable of being run as model farms, could be exempted from seizure. Forest land was not affected, ^{at that time,} Approximately one and a half million hectares were taken, of which about one million ^{was} ~~had been~~ distributed to 143,000 peasants. The average amount received per peasant was approximately 1.3 hectare. The effect of this expropriation, it can be seen, was more social than economic. It was designed to win the support of the peasantry ^{for the new regime}. While destroying the economic base of the conservative land-owning ^{the} class.

From the signing of the Armistice the Soviet Union maneuvered to subjugate Rumania economically. The Armistice terms, whether or not so designed in the beginning, admirably served this purpose. With apparent

generosity, the Russians required of Rumania only \$300 million dollars in reparations, a seemingly not unreasonable amount in view of Rumanian invasion of the Soviet Union. This reparations burden was later several times increased, however, by a unilateral Soviet decision to value reparations deliveries at the lower 1938 prices. The reparations clause was but one of several onerous economic provisions of the Armistice. Under its terms everything taken by the Rumanians since 1941 in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was required to be returned, such property to be identified by the Russians alone. The Rumanians were likewise required to supply Soviet armies passing through or stationed in the country. All German assets, including western properties seized by the Germans, were required to be handed over. On top of all these official claims came the looting by Soviet soldiers, suddenly placed amid a plenty that few of them could imagine. Rumanian losses, then, bore little relation to the armistice terms. By a process, in part deliberate, in part anarchic, Rumanian economic resources were eaten away. The vast currency inflation which resulted partly from the application of armistice terms, in part from a deliberate Soviet policy of impoverishment, fatally weakened the two social elements most bitterly opposed to Communism: the middle class and the peasantry.

When
While the Communists acted to destroy the economic strength of their opponents, they *under*took at the same time to destroy their political influence.

the National Peasant Leader,
Iuliu Maniu was a prime target. Throughout the autumn and winter a rising crescendo of propaganda ^{termed} ~~called~~ Maniu a "fascist" and hater of the Soviets. The power of censorship granted the Soviets under the armistice was used to close down both National Peasant and Liberal newspapers and deny these parties access to the printing press. Rumanian Communist propaganda ^{a ~~hacked~~} ~~flowed~~ the Rumanian government and the historical parties from the Soviet radio. The historical parties could answer these attacks by word of mouth only when their representatives in the provinces were able to avoid the violence of Communist goon squads.

Communist use of street demonstrations (as a tactic) to intimidate the Rumanian Government and its supporters began in earnest during January 1945 and rose to a crescendo during late February. Every control device available to Communist-dominated labor unions was used to force demonstrators into the streets. All provocations to violence were offered the Radescu regime. At last, on 24 February, eight demonstrators were killed by shooting of undetermined origin. Soviet charges of unprovoked murder at once blanketed Radescu's protestations. The stage was thus set for Vyshinsky's entrance.

Once the Communists became the dominant element in the Rumanian government, their concept of the use of the street changed. Goons were turned loose to demonstrate in favor of the Groza regime and prevent - by violence if necessary - "reactionary" demonstrations against it. National

opposition to the Communist-sponsored government found its natural focal point in King Mihai. The young king used the Potsdam Declaration on democratic governments as an opportunity to demand that the Groza Government resign. Groza curtly refused, an action unprecedented in Rumanian politics. Relations between the king and his cabinet were thereupon effectively suspended, the king withdrawing to his palace at Sinaia in the Carpathians while the cabinet ruled by decree.

Only on one occasion during this period - perhaps it was the only occasion after 23 August 1944 - was the mass of Rumanians able to register its hatred of its Communist masters. Early on the Morning of 8 November 1945, King Mihai's name day, the citizens of Bucharest began to trickle by ones and twos into the huge many-sided square fronting the Royal Palace. The fact that King Mihai was in Sinaia (German bombing had seriously damaged the Bucharest palace) in no way influenced the crowds. It was the custom on this day for diplomats, government officials, and private citizens to sign the guest books at the palace. On this occasion, however, the palace gates were locked; police and civilian goons turned away all those seeking to enter except foreign diplomatic and military officials. The crowd, whose growing numbers soon ~~filled~~ ^{refused} the square, ~~to sing the national anthem~~ ^{to sing the national anthem} and cheer the king.

Serious violence could have been avoided, even then, if Rumanian Communists had used ~~even~~ ^{just} a modicum of good judgement. Instead, by mid-morning

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truck loads of thugs wheeled into the square with obvious orders to break up the demonstration. In their haste to counter the demonstration for the king the Rumanian Communists had commandeered Soviet army trucks and sent them into the square still bearing Soviet license plates! Several hours of dodging carelessly driven heavy trucks finally infuriated the demonstrators. ^{Several} ~~The~~ trucks were attacked, overturned and set on fire. Someone in the melee fired a pistol into the air. At once the wooden gates at the Ministry of Interior, across the Square from the Palace, were thrown open, a squad of civilians with submachine guns crossed the sidewalk into the street and fired on the crowd. Here ^{many} persons were killed and wounded. Although it had not come prepared for conflict, the crowd held its ground until lunchtime. Nothing in Rumania, and certainly not a political demonstration, can hold ^{the presence of} ~~its~~ ground against mealtime. The crowd went home to eat and the square was forthwith occupied by ^{Government} ~~Rumanian~~ troops.

Although it filled the press and radio with charges of murder designed to conceal its own involvement, the Groza Government ^{against its opponents} (and the Soviet occupation authorities) suffered a severe defeat on 8 November. None of the "reactionaries", who were accused of fomenting the bloodshed, were ever brought to trial, perhaps because photographs taken in the Palace Square on that day by members of the U.S. Military Representation clearly revealed Communist provocations. ^{challenge}

The events of 8 November may have made the Soviets and Rumanian Communists appreciate their essential weakness in the country. In any event, the Foreign Ministers, meeting in Moscow in December, ordered Foreign Minister Vyshinsky and Ambassadors Harriman and Clark-Kerr to proceed at once to Bucharest with instructions to work out a solution to the conflict between king and cabinet. Once again Vyshinsky dominated the Rumanian capital. Early in 1946 it was announced that one representative from the National Peasant and Liberal Parties would join the cabinet as Ministers without portfolio. The U.S. and British Governments ^{immediately} ~~thereupon~~ recognized the Groza regime.

~~SECRET~~

As an exercise in futility, the mission of the three ministers has not been surpassed in the post-war era. The appointment of ministers without authority or responsibility, powerless to do more than protest to meetings of the cabinet, ^{which they attended on sufferance,} of course changed nothing. The Communists continued their economic and political measures designed to establish effective control of the country, while the two representatives of the opposition were effectively prevented, by intimidation and threats, from fulfilling even the watching brief that they had been given. It is difficult to understand why the opposition leaders, Maniu and Bratianu, accepted this meaningless compromise. Presumably these Rumanian Micawbers thought something might turn up. Hoping against hope was a popular past-time in Rumania in those days.

Once western recognition had been granted the Rumanian Communists were free to move toward their next objective: legitimization of their regime through national elections. The Communists suffered no illusions about their popularity with the country. Standing alone, they would be disastrously defeated. Their unpopularity had to be covered by a common ticket of all parties in the National Democratic Front. In particular, the Communists had to combine with the Social-Democrats in order to cover their weakness in the working class.

For many months, the Communists had pushed their infiltration of the Social-Democratic Party. Constantine Titel Petrescu, the Socialist leader, was a man of honor without the ability to lead. When he made an effort, in August 1945 to take his party out of the Groza cabinet he found that the Communists, by appeals to personal ambition, the use of blackmail, and similar tactics, had effectively undercut him. Not one member of his party in the cabinet resigned. When the Socialists held their congress in March, ¹⁹⁴⁶ Petrescu let it be known that he wanted his party to enter its own ticket in the approaching elections. By the use of a letter later shown to have been forged, a member of this party holding a government post was able to stampede the Socialist Congress into support of a common ticket with the Communists.

The election of a one-house parliament, the first supposedly free election in Rumania since 1937, was announced for ¹⁹~~18~~ November. Every device to win an election - and many are known in Rumania - was then employed. Several categories of opponents were eliminated by provisions of the electoral law eliminating their right to the ballot. Local election officials, all of whom were appointed by the Groza regime and supported it, arbitrarily barred members of opposition parties from registering. Persistent opponents were frequently discouraged from

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registration by the violence of ~~goon~~-squads. Candidates for Parliament were discouraged by every form of pressure from running on the National Peasant and Liberal tickets. Agents of the government and representatives of the FND parties, when taking action against members of the opposition - "fascists" and "reactionaries" they were call^{ed} - were compelled to keep on the watch for visiting teams of American or British military representatives and wandering foreign journalists. On the whole, nevertheless, these provincial agents performed their task of suppression efficiently and with a minimum of fuss. Government and party officials received visiting foreigners freely during the electoral campaign and answered their questions suavely. Complaints of the ^{-traditional} historical parties could be aired with relative ease only to the foreign missions in Bucharest. Thus, although Communist control of the electoral campaign was reported to the west, open international scandal was avoided.

Control of the electoral tally on 16 November was not as efficient. Political parties in opposition normally do not expect to win elections in Rumania, since the government always exercises its authority to the fullest. Without doubt, Maniu and Bratianu expected the FND to count itself into office with a minimum of trouble. The confusion in government ranks as the count of votes progressed, the delay in announcing the results,

were a revelation. Even if the inevitable opposition charges of trickery and theft are accepted with circumspection, clearly the Groza government was ~~confronted~~^{rmet} with a tidal wave of votes that almost, if not completely, defeated the FND single ticket. The Rumanian pattern of electoral victory

by the party in office was preserved however. It was announced ~~on~~^{five} ~~November~~^{days after the election} that the FND had captured 348 seats, the combined opposition ^{only}

66. The Liberal and National Peasant Ministers thereupon resigned from the Cabinet. ⁹¹ Buttressed by the appearance of popular support thus obtained, the Groza regime made the year 1947 one of terror in Rumania. It was able to do this, in part, because agreement was at last reached on a peace treaty. On 10 February, the Rumanian treaty, after long and exacting negotiation, was signed in Paris. Its terms, which generally followed the Armistice of 1944, provided that within ninety days after the treaty came into force all allied forces, except the Soviet forces stationed in the country to maintain "communication with Austria", were required to withdraw. The Communist regime could thus look forward at last to mastery in its own house.

Liquidation of the opposition, however, did not wait on ratification of the treaty. During the spring, night arrests of opposition leaders were

begun. Clearly the Communists no longer felt great need to respect foreign opinion. In July, Ion Mihalache, deputy leader of the National-Peasants, was arrested with several companions just before their departure abroad by air. Although it is evident that Mihalache had prepared his departure with the full consent of Maniu, who was ill at the time but would not have left the country, the vice president clearly fell into the hands of government provocateurs. Mihalache and his associates were arrested at plane-side just before their departure on 14 July. The arrest of Iuliu Maniu followed on shortly thereafter.

Following the trial of the coup d'etat
The trial of Maniu, Mihalache and eighteen others, *(four were tried in absentia)*, on charges of 29 October ~~November~~, which opened on 29 October, demonstrated the extent of Communist encroachment on Rumanian liberties since the coup d'etat of 23 August 1944. In slightly more than three years since that coup d'etat, the Communists had decided that they could proceed with impunity against their principal opponent and the dominant leader of the country. For the first time in the post-war period, open accusations of conspiracy ~~to engage~~ in ~~espionage and subversion~~ were made against Americans. Minor officials of the American Military Representation in Bucharest were accused of plotting dire crimes of espionage and subversion with the dependents, headed by Maniu. The evidence introduced was a typical

farrago of distortions, falsifications and induced confessions. Because it was the first case of this kind, however, the sensational testimony attracted some attention in the American press.

The trail of Maniu was noteworthy for the splendid defiant gesture of Constantin Titel Petrescu, the Socialist leader. At the earlier war-crimes trial of the Antonescus, Iuliu Maniu, after completing his testimony, had stepped to the dock and shaken the hands of the Marshal and Mihai Antonescu. This magnanimous ^{act of} ~~gesture~~ by the Antonescus' principal opponent was not lost on the Rumanian people. The Communist press boiled with indignation over this "fascist" gesture. Upon completing his testimony at the Maniu trial, Petrescu stepped over to the dock and shook Maniu's hand. It was Petrescu's finest hour.

The verdict of the court was a foregone conclusion. Maniu, Mihalache and others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Varying terms in prison were meted out to the other defendants. Political opposition to Communism in Rumania was effectively silenced.

There remained one last opponent of Communist ^bdomination, King Mihai. Communist "friendship" for the King, a necessary tactic in 1944; had passed through tolerance (1946), to a clear realization that integration of Rumania in the developing Soviet system required his removal. The disappearance of Maniu facilitated this action.

During the autumn of 1947, the Communists ^{at last} moved to take over important cabinet posts that had been held by non-party members of the Government coalition. Anu Pauker, the principal leader of the party, entered the cabinet as Foreign Minister, replacing Gheorghe Tatrescu whose usefulness had ended with the ratification of the peace treaty. At the same time, Emil Bodnaras, ~~known as a~~ ^{the} deserter from the Rumanian Army, was named Defense Minister. Groza continued as ^{figure-head} Prime Minister.

The departure of King Mihai was complicated, and perhaps aided, by his attendance at the marriage of Princess Elizabeth in ^{November} and his own plans for marriage. After attending Elizabeth's wedding, Mihai continued his visit in England. By this time his interest in Princess Anne of Bourbon-Parma had become obvious. His return to Bucharest ^{on} ~~21~~ December seems to have surprised the Government which had apparently expected Mihai to abdicate and remain abroad. Since the King's marriage required the assent of his Government, the King formally requested this action on December.

~~Whatever may have been the intentions of the Communist leaders toward the throne, the wish of the King to marry forced them to a decision.~~

On ²⁴ December, Prime Minister Groza requested that the King, who was spending Christmas holidays at Sinaia, come to Bucharest ^{the next day,} ~~days~~

to discuss an urgent matter of state
later. On 30 December

, Graza and Gheorghiu-Dej met the King at his aunt's palace on the outskirts of Bucharest. The interview was short and pointed. King Mihai was offered an opportunity to abdicate at once "or be responsible for the resulting bloodshed." He was shown Soviet tanks patrolling the streets. He was to be permitted, on the other hand, to take his personal possessions and members of the Royal suite abroad with him. After a short period of consultation and reflection, the King accepted the terms offered. An offer to keep the Royal estates was declined. On 31 January 1948, ~~December~~, a special train took Mihai, his mother, and ~~Chisita~~ some members of his suite into exile.

The Rumanian Communists, who had numbered less than 1,000 in August 1944, in three and a half years had overturned the monarchy. }